Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 7 October 2005

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 7 October 2005

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REMOTE WELL-BEING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A public seminar in Canberra on Tuesday 1 November will throw the spotlight on the health and well-being of the 500,000 people - 2.5 to 3 per cent of the population - who live in remote Australia.[1]

These people and the communities in which they live have very particular challenges to meet. Many of the assets taken for granted in Australia's cities are absent or provided in quite different ways in remote communities. Communications are often unreliable and expensive, fuel costs are high, fresh food is hard to come by and locally available health services are minimal and under-staffed. Housing is expensive to build and to maintain, roads are poor and youngsters may rely for their education on the School of The Air and their own parents' close involvement.

At a public seminar on Tuesday 1 November a small number of experts will saddle up to describe various aspects of the lifestyle and community challenges of life in remote areas. Professor John Wakerman, head of the Centre for Remote Heath in Alice Springs, will discuss some of the special characteristics of health and health services in remote as distinct from rural areas. Andrew Phillips from the AIHW will talk about statistical reporting of remote issues and Julie Austin, from Carers Australia, will describe the special role of carers in more remote areas.

Colleen Prideaux, CEO of the Ceduna-Koonibba Health Service, will lead a session on Indigenous affairs in remote areas.

Special guest Senator Barnaby Joyce will describe some of the particular political issues for people in remote Australia. The seminar will end with two case-studies of issues currently affecting remote communities. Roy Price, Remote Community Nutritionist with Territory Health, will talk about some of the successes and ongoing challenges in food security in remote communities: how to ensure that systems are in place to make fresh food available at affordable prices to all consumers. Finally Peter Cahill, Area Director of the Queensland Ambulance Service for the Tablelands, Cape York and the Torres Strait, will describe some of the work regularly facing ambulance officers and their service in far north Queensland.

The seminar will be under starter's orders at 9.00am at Regatta Point in Canberra on Tuesday 1 November and will run until 1.00pm. Contact the Alliance for further details.

Further information: Leanne Coleman and Lyn Eiszele, NRHA 02 6285 4660

[1] The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines remote and very remote areas as census collector districts with an average Accessibility/Remoteness Index (which has values ranging from 0 to 12) greater than 5.80. Examples of Remote places include Alice Springs, Mount Isa and Roxby Downs. Very Remote places include Groote Eylandt, Nhulunbuy, Halls Creek and Walgett. The 2.5-3 per cent figure is in AIHW Catalogue PHE 53 at page 76.

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Professor James Dunbar appointed Editor of the Australian Journal of Rural Health
Full text of the NRHA announcement is at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=MediaReleases&Year=2005 and is reprinted below.

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THE NATIONAL SARRAH CONFERENCE
Building bridges ….. Crossing borders
A Conference for Rural and Remote Allied Health Professionals
13 – 16 September 2006
Albury Convention Centre, ALBURY, NSW

CALL FOR PAPERS NOW OPEN
Information available on the website – http://www.sarrah.org.au
Deadline for abstracts: 30 November 2006

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Subject: Schedule of programs for Rural Health Education Foundation October through December
From: Clair North

The program schedule for the remainder of the year includes the programs listed below. Each program is repeated the following Friday.

Immunisation Update – 11 October (LIVE)
Skin Cancer: 'Spot' Decisions – 15 October (Repeat)
Falls Prevention – 15 November (LIVE)
Prostate Cancer: Treatment and Access – 29 November (Repeat)
Obesity and Overweight: It CAN be Managed – 13 December (Repeat)

Information on the programs and satellite locations and times can be obtained by visiting http://www.rhef.com.au or contacting the Rural Health Education Foundation on (02) 6232 5480

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AMA POSITION STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH

The AMA called for direct involvement of Indigenous people in determining the healthcare they require and the manner in which those services are provided. The AMA position statement describes the disadvantage that exists in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and sets down principles to help address this.

The AMA media release is at http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-6GV25A and the full Position Statement at http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-6D588F

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From: Generic Account ALLIEDHEALTH
Subject: 2nd NSW Rural Allied Health Conference - 28-29 October 2005

Its not too late to register for the 2nd NSW Rural Allied Health Conference on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 October 2005. This Conference will give allied health clinicians (novice and experienced), academics, students and managers the chance to think outside their "professional" square. The Conference will:
* Discuss the future for rural allied health practice.
* Expose those attending to issues and initiatives from other professions.
* Consider how allied health professionals can work together to improve the health of people in rural and remote NSW.

Invite speakers include:
Jason Warnock, Podiatrist, Queensland
Dr Rosalie Boyce, Research Fellow, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Queensland
Robyn Adams and Jan Dent, Executive Committee, NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching
Deborah Hyland, Director, Workforce Leadership and Development
Professor Val Robertson, Professor of Allied Health, University of Newcastle
Emma Birch, WA Country Health Service and Ivan Lin, Combined Universities for Rural Health

There will be:
Quality presentations from a range of rural allied health professionals about initiatives in workforce, clinical service delivery and how allied health are working together; Workshops on Practical Research Skills; Working with Farmers and Farming Families; Skills to work with the diabetic foot; and 'Towards the Future' Open Forums, facilitated by Julie McCrossin,
discussing Technology and Allied Health; and The role of Allied Health.

View the Preliminary Program and Register online at http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au/conferences

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From: Clair North
Subject: Immunisation Update - LIVE Rural Health Education Foundation National Satellite TV Broadcast

Immunisation Update
Tuesday 11th October 2005
This program focuses on the recent changes to the National Immunisation Program Schedule (due to commence on November 1st 2005) and the basic principles for safe vaccine management. The special vaccination needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the specific changes to the schedule are discussed. Case study discussion focuses on the challenges of setting up an immunisation program in an Aboriginal community.

Program information can be found by clicking http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/511/511.html

Contact: Rural Health Education Foundation via email rhef@rhef.com.au or telephone (02) 6232-5480

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From: meetings@astmanagement.com.au
Subject: The 10th NSW Rural Mental Health Conference

The 10th NSW Rural Mental Health Conference with the theme, Mental Health, Rural Health, Our Health, will be held on the 16th to 18th of

November 2005 at Twin Towns, Tweed Heads, NSW.

The theme acknowledges the multi-faceted approach that clinicians, managers and policy makers face when making mental health decisions in rural and remote areas.

The Conference will have three main streams - Teamwork/Partnerships, Rural Mental Health and Physical Health/Mental Health, acknowledging that a rural mental health worker faces many challenges in their career and is required to be multi-skilled across a number of areas.

The full list of speakers and presenters is now available on the conference website http://www.astmanagement.com.au/nswhealth5

Mr Richard Buss & Prof Brian Kelly
Conference Co Chairs
10th NSW Rural Mental Health Conference
Conference Secretariat details:
c/- AST Management Pty Ltd
PO Box 5025 GCMC, Bundall Qld 4217
Ph: (d) 07 5577 3386 Jan Marquardt
Email: jan.marquardt@astmanagement.com.au
http://www.astmanagement.com.au/nswhealth5

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From: Margaret McJannett
Subject: COSA's Annual Scientific Meeting

COSA's Annual Scientific Meeting, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane Qld. 16 - 18 November 2005. Information at http://www.cosa.org.au/content.cfm?randid=761823

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

Rural women more overweight than city counterparts, study
Rural women might be happier but they are not healthier, according to the latest study on women's health in Australia.
http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200509/s1461958.htm

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RURAL PEOPLE HAVE PALLIATIVE CARE CHOICE

People in rural areas faced with making decisions about palliative care have help and advice available locally, the Minister for Ageing, Julie Bishop, said while launching a Community Service Announcement at Parliament House in Canberra.

The announcement, which will be shown on regional television stations, has been prepared by the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP). It has been funded by the Australian Government under its $5 million Rural Palliative Care Program. "The TV message will raise awareness of palliative care and encourage people to see their GPs for local information on the care that is available," Ms Bishop said.

The full text of the Minister's statement is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-jb-bis133.htm and further information is available at http://www.health.gov.au/palliativecare

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From: Jill Hanvey
Subject: Information Technology in NSW Health Symposium

You are invited to attend the Information Technology in NSW Health Symposium 2005 on Friday, 28 October at the Stamford Hotel Sydney Airport. Attached is the Program, which has a wide range of presentations including EHR, clinical redesign and Telehealth programs in NSW and reflects the recent changes in NSW Health. To register please visit our web site http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/pmd/telehealth/

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PARTYline is the official newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Keep up to date with rural health policy information and good news stories on living and working in the rural health community. The August edition (No. 23) of PARTYline is available now. Available online at

http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=PartyLine or receive a hard copy by emailing partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

Work has commenced on the next edition of PARTYline which is due out before Christmas and we are now seeking articles from interested people. The due date for articles to be received is 10 October. The size of short articles is usually 150-250 words; larger articles run between 250 and 550 words. We encourage photos that relate to the story. The photographic theme for the issue will be of 'weather' - as it impacts on rural life. You can invite friends to submit photos, in rural settings, of storms, drought, rain, floods, snowfall, dust storms etc. Photos need to be high resolution tif or jpg files (or an old-fashioned photo.) leanne@ruralhealth.org.au

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The Australian Journal of Rural Health invites you to contribute to the ongoing development of rural health in Australia, and submit your manuscripts for publication. Send your papers to AJRH@newcastle.edu.au and be pleasantly surprised at how quickly you can be in print. Author guidelines and sample issues of the AJRH are available at http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=1038-5282 or email ajrh@newcastle.edu.au for further information. The August 2005 issue of the journal is available online now at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION POSITION PAPER ON HEALTH WORKFORCE

According to the Productivity Commission, the training of additional health workers is necessary and important. However, reform also needs to address the fragmentation, poor coordination, regulatory inflexibility and distortions in funding arrangements that will prevent the health workforce from responding effectively to the challenges ahead.

The Commission is seeking reaction to a set of draft proposals intended to improve sustainability and responsiveness across the spectrum of health workforce arrangements. They include:
*independent assessment, through a national advisory agency, of opportunities to extend the roles of some of heath workers, so as to make best use of their skills while maintaining safety and quality
* consolidation of the accreditation of health workforce education and training courses into a single national body. This would help to integrate the training that doctors, nurses and other health workers receive, enabling them to work better as a team
* uniform national registration standards for health care workers and national assessment of overseas trained health professionals
* transparent processes to assess whether extending Medicare subsidies to some new services would lead to more cost-effective delivery of overall care needs.

The Commission will finalise its report to government by the end of December 2005, after having carefully assessed the responses to its Position Paper. Email submissions to healthworkforce@pc.gov.au

Further information is at http://www.pc.gov.au/study/healthworkforce/positionpaper/index.html

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LIFELINE'S JUST ASK - 1 300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service
Lifeline's Just ask is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit http://www.justask.org.au and further information is available at national@lifeline.org.au and http://www.lifeline.org.au

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IMPROVING AFTER HOURS MEDICAL SERVICES IN RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA

The Rural Doctors Workforce Agency (RDWA) has nationally launched the Rural After Hours Triage Education Resource, or RAHTER, a training resource that will improve the provision of after hours medical services in rural and remote communities throughout Australia. Information at http://www.ruraldoc.com.au/

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Extract from Australian Doctor E-NEWS
(subscribe at http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/enewsletter.asp)

AFFORDABLE IMAGING ON THE WAY FOR EVEN REMOTEST DOCTORS (21-Sep-2005)
A NEW research centre in Perth is developing more affordable imaging and testing devices for use by GPs in even the remotest locations.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/C1/0C0367C1.asp

TIRED OF RURAL GP 'MORALISING' (Letter to the Editor, 28-Sep-2005)
Letters on the rural-urban divide; skin clinics; vax injection techniques.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/58/0C036C58.asp

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NEW ARTICLES IN RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH

'Development of a common national questionnaire to evaluate student perceptions about the Australian Rural Clinical Schools Program'
The FRAME questionnaire will ensure that not only will comprehensive national outcomes be measured and progressively reported as students enter the rural workforce but also that individual Rural Clinical Schools have a tool that will allow modifications to be made to their programs as they mature and develop so that the results can be optimised.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=486

'Recruiting undergraduates to rural practice: what the students can tell us'
There is much evidence supporting rural undergraduate education experiences as a longterm workforce strategy. But does this mean that

any rural intervention will work? This article from Tasmania throws up some interesting questions.

http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=412

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From: Jen Bichel-Findlay
Subject: Information regarding new Cancer Treatments Resource

The Cancer Institute has launched the evidence-based Standard Cancer Treatments (CI-SCaT) for patients, cancer practitioners, and general practitioners throughout NSW. Professor Robyn Ward originally developed the website at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, and the Cancer Institute assumed responsibility for this resource in October 2004.

Essentially it is a website that contains evidence-based chemotherapy protocols, and is freely available to patients, carers, and health professionals such as medical officers, nurses, pharmacists, and GPs. By December this year, there will be over 200 protocols available.

We are currently providing education on the resource to rural NSW (Dubbo, Orange, Cowra, Bathurst, Young, Goulburn, Armidale, Inverell,Tamworth, Muswellbrook, Broken Bill, Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Albury, Bega, Pambula, Moruya, Grafton, Lismore, Ballina, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, and Taree) over the next 2 months.

Further information is at www.treatment.cancerinstitute.org.au

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AIHW REPORTS

Locality matters - The influence of geography on general practice in Australia 1998- 2004
Rapidly growing communities within reach of Australia's large cities are creating unique challenges for GPs practising in these areas. Bathurst, Wodonga, Toowoomba, and Victor Harbor are examples of Inner Regional areas that that are undergoing a population swell and hence rapidly growing demand for health services.
AIHW media statement at http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2005/mr20050930b.cfm
Full report at http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10171

Health Expenditure Australia 2003-04
Health expenditure in Australia in 2003-04 was $78.4 billion or $3,919 per person, according to a report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. This represents a $6.1 billion increase from 2002-03, or $267 more per person than the previous year. Health expenditure as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated at 9.7% for 2003-04, up from 9.5% in 2002-03 and up from 8.3% a decade ago.
AIHW media statement at http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2005/mr20050930a.cfm
Full report at http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10204

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"WEEKS" AND "DAYS"

National Mental Health Week (9-16 October 2005). http://www.mhca.org.au

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BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391

Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross-cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information http://www.bushcrisisline.org.au

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NEW GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

A new guide to help health professionals prevent cardiovascular disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has been launched. The guide, Strengthening Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, was developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. The guide will be sent to doctors and health professionals at all Aboriginal Medical Services and is also available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/ind1syn.htm

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Australia's Welfare Conference 2005: 'Connected Challenges, Connecting Response'

Presented by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Library of Australia, Canberra, Wednesday 30th November

If you pride yourself on being at the forefront of Australian welfare information and statistics then attendance at this year's Australia's

Welfare Conference is a must. The conference held at the National Library of Australia in Canberra will benefit all professionals, government administrators and academics serious about welfare issues, statistics and information.

Full registration includes morning and afternoon teas, a full buffet lunch, and a copy of Australia's Welfare 2005. Visit http://www.aihw.gov.au to register or contact Anna Stark on 02 6244 1287, or anna.stark@aihw.gov.au.

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'RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH PAPERS 1991 - 2005' CD

This CD is a valuable resource for students, academics, researchers and policy writers in the field of rural, regional and remote health. The 1,800 separate authored documents contain 17,000 pages of information and are searchable by key words and phrases.

The CD includes:
* Full proceedings of the 8th National Rural Health Conference, Alice Springs, March 2005
* Healthy Horizons Outlook 2003–2007
* PARTYline newsletters
* The Australian Journal of Rural Health 1992–2004
* Full proceedings of the Infront Outback Rural Health Scientific Conferences
* The Alliance's Rural Health Information Papers
* The Alliance's Annual reports

The CD is provided free of charge to all friends of the Alliance. If you would like to receive a copy of the CD go to the friends page at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=Friendsand fill in the membership form and return it with your payment to: National Rural Health Alliance, PO Box 280, DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600.

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT ON ADVANCES IN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Advances in medical technology have brought large benefits to the Australian community, but they may also have driven around one-third of the growth in real health spending over the past decade, according to the Productivity Commission. These trends are set to continue.

The Commission found that, in many cases, increased expenditure on new medical technologies reflected many more people being treated as well as better quality treatments. On the whole, it seems likely that the benefits of advances in medical technology have outweighed the additional costs. That said, the Commission found that the cost effectiveness of individual technologies varies widely and for some is not known.

Further information is at http://www.pc.gov.au/study/medicaltechnology/finalreport/index.html

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at grovesc@winshop.com.au (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to grovesc@winshop.com.au).

As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the view of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at grovesc@winshop.com.au.

This issue is going to 2,497 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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Professor James Dunbar appointed Editor of the Australian Journal of Rural Health

Professor James Dunbar has been appointed Editor of the Australian Journal of Rural Health, to succeed Professor John Marley in a planned transition over the next few months. Professor Dunbar is Inaugural Director of the Greater Green Triangle Rural Department of Rural Health based at Warrnambool in Victoria. He has wide experience both in Australia and internationally in health care initiatives, including as a general practitioner and as Director of Community Hospitals and community rehabilitation programs.

"I am looking forward to working with the Board of Management and the Journal Associates to build on the work led over the past three years by John Marley to retain the AJRH's quality standards and to further enhance both its relevance and sustainability," Professor Dunbar said.

The AJRH has a unique place in Australia's rural and remote health sector as a peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary academic journal. It is owned and managed by the National Rural Health Alliance and is the official journal of the Association for Australian Rural Nurses, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, the Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia and Services for Rural and Remote Allied Health. The AJRH is published by Blackwell Publishing Asia in Melbourne and is available both in hard copy and on-line.

Gordon Gregory, Chair of the Board of Management of AJRH, paid tribute to the work as Editor of John Marley. "Under John Marley the AJRH had come of age as an academic journal of high quality, which now attracted authors from around the world. Nevertheless there is always the need for sensible change and for developing the journal's relationships with other professional bodies and publications. This will be one of the ongoing challenges for James and the Board to work on," Mr Gregory said.

The AJRH was founded in 1993 by Professor Desley Hegney and the Association for Australian Rural Nurses.